

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 AF-10 EA-11 MMS-03 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

CG-00 TRSE-00 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 ACDA-19

AID-20 DRC-01 /164 W

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R 271225Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 582

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

MEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2999

CINCPACFLT

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S E C R E T COLOMBO 0552

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IO, CE

SUBJ: SUPPORT OF U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA

REF STATE 28352

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES GSL WILL CONTINUE TO PERMIT VISITS TO COLOMBO BY US NAVAL VESSELS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THAT COLOMBO IS OPEN TO ALL NAVAL VESSELS. THIS OPEN-DOOR POLICY WAS SOMEWHAT MODIFIED IN DEC 73 WHEN, IN CONTEXT OF MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, PM DECLARED IN NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY THAT BUNKERING FACILITIES WOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO ANY SHIP CARRYING ARMS AND AMMUNITION OR WARSHIPS GOING TO ASSISTANCE OF COUNTRIES ENGAGED IN WAR. PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED PORT OF TRINCOMALEE "OFF LIMITS" TO ANY FOREIGN WARSHIP. WE CONSIDER GSL WOULD NOT BE RECEPTIVE TO U.S. SHIP VISIT NOW BECAUSE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLANS (COLOMBO 446), BUT WE EXPECT THIS SENSITIVITY TO BE SHORT-LIVED AND THAT NORMAL LEVEL OF SHIP VISIT WILL BE POSSIBLE IN NEAR FUTURE. WE BELIEVE FREQUENCY OF SIX TO EIGHT

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VISIT OF MODERATE SIZE A YEAR, AS EVENLY SPACED AS POSSIBLE,

WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO GSL AND APPROPRIATE TO PROFILE WE WANT FOR USG IN SRI LANKA.

2. OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCES FOR U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT ENGAGED IN SUPPORT ACTIVITIES WOULD NOT LIKELY BE REQUIRED BECAUSE OF SRI LANKA'S SMALL SIZE. LANDING CLEARANCES FOR SUCH AIRCRAFT MIGHT BE SEEN AS SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN U.S. MILITARY USE OF SRI LANKA IN ORDER SUPPORT INCREASED INDIAN OCEAN OPERATIONS AND WOULD THEREFORE, PROBABLY BE DISAPPROVED. ALTHOUGH BRITISH AND CANADIANS DO HAVE SIMILAR FLIGHTS, THESE CAN BE EXPLAINED IN COMMONWEALTH CONTEXT, WHICH DOES NOT APPLY TO UNITED STATES. MEDICAL EVACUATION FLIGHTS AND OTHERS OF EMERGENCY NATURE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO GSL.

3. GSL HAS ROUTINELY ALLOWED SHORE LEAVE AS PART OF U.S. NAVY SHIP VISIT PROGRAM OVER PAST TWO YEARS. NUMBER OF PERSONNEL IS CIRCUMSCRIBED BY LIMITED FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN COLOMBO, AND PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES 500 PERSONS A DAY IS MAXIMUM FEASIBLE. IN CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTING VISIBLE U.S. PRESENCE, UNIFORMS DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, CIVILIAN CLOTHING IS MORE APPROPRIATE FOR SHORE LEAVE.

4. BECAUSE OF GSL'S NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THIS OR ANY OTHER CEYLONESE GOVERNMENT WOULD SIGN ANY TYPE OF FORMAL AGREEMENT PERTAINING TO U.S. FORCES.

5. SHORE PATROLS FROM VISITING U.S. NAVY SHIPS ROUTINELY ACCOMPANY CEYLONESE NAVY MILITARY POLICE WHEN NECESSARY DURING COLOMBO VISITS.

6. GSL CONSIDERS FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS FROM BUNKERING VISITING NAVAL VESSELS STRONG JUSTIFICATION FOR PERMITTING NAVAL VISITS. IN NORMAL SUPPLY SITUATION, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE NO RELUCTANCE TO PROVIDE BUNKERING SERVICES. AT MOMENT, HOWEVER, AVAILABILITIES ARE SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN.

7. MOST DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR GSL IS NEED TO DEFEND DECISION TO ALLOW MILITARY SHIP VISITS WHEN ITS OWN INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE PROPOSAL CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OUTSIDE
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MILITARY FORCES FROM AREA. HIGH VILIBILITY AND/OR FREQUENCY OF MILITARY SHIP VISITS IS LIKELY TO GENERATE GREATER OPPOSITION TO SUCH VISITS. ALSO, GSL, BECAUSE OF ITS NON-ALIGNED POSTURE, WILL WANT TO MAINTAIN BALANCE IN DEALING WITH MAJOR POWERS AND WILL BE SENSITIVE TO ANY UNUSUAL BIG-POWER PRESENCE. AT SAME TIME, PM IS APPARENTLY SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET MOTIVES AND IS THEREFORE PROBABLY NOT COMPLETELY UNHAPPY THAT UNITED STATES IS MAINTAINING PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, AT LEAST AS

LONG AS SOVIETS MAINTAIN OR EXPAND THEIRS.

8. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THERE ARE ANY INDUCEMENTS OR SPECIFIC ACTIONS USG COULD TAKE TO GENERATE MORE COOPERATIVE GSL ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR NAVAL SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS. ON OTHER HAND, ANY FAILURE ON U.S. PART TO PROVIDE FAIR SHARE OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GSL COULD WELL CAUSE CEYLONENE TO TAKE LESS FAVORABLE VIEW TOWARD U.S. SHIP VISITS.VAN HOLLEN

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